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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; June 24, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo
President Lee Tells Education Minister Off for Inaction on Curbing
Private Education Expenditure

JoongAng Ilbo, Seoul Shinmun
Hospital Switches off Life Support in Landmark Case;
Patient will Continue to Receive Nutrition, Doctors Say

Dong-a Ilbo
Lawmakers from Main Opposition DP Stage Sit-in Protest against
Ruling GNP's Unilateral Decision to Open a New Parliamentary
Session

Hankook Ilbo
Tariffs to Intensify Again amid Fiscal Deficit
Import Levies on Wheat and Other Goods to Return
to Previous Levels; Criticism Growing that ROKG is Trying to Make up
for Losses
After Cutting Taxes for the Rich

Hankyoreh Shinmun
National Intelligence Service Suspected of Involvement in Halting
Government and Business Aid to Progressive Organizations

Segye Ilbo
Will President Lee's Return to "Centrist Pragmatism" Serve to Heal
Division and Feud in Our Society?

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

Ambassadors from the U.S., China, Japan and Russia, four member
countries of the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear program,
in a June 23 seminar organized by a ruling Grand National Party
(GNP) lawmaker shared the view that the nuclear issue should be
resolved within the framework of the existing Six-Party Talks.
(All)

In a related development, China yesterday expressed opposition to

the five-nation format proposed by the ROKG. China's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Qin Gang said during a June 23 regular briefing: "China thinks it necessary to seek denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula through the Six-Party Talks." (All)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

According to the Japanese Coast Guard, North Korea has warned Japan to stay out of parts of its eastern coastal waters from June 25 to July 10, in an apparent sign that the North is close to firing more missiles. (JoongAng)

The U.S. has successfully conducted a series of missile interception capability tests using its airborne laser system. The U.S. Missile Defense Agency (MDA) said on June 22 that its airborne laser system successfully downed enemy missiles shortly after their launch over the Pacific Ocean June 6 and 13. (JoongAng, Dong-a, Hankook, Hankyoreh, Seoul)

MEDIA ANALYSIS

-N. Korea

All ROK media gave wide attention to yesterday's seminar hosted by a ruling Grand National Party (GNP) lawmaker and attended by

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ambassadors from the U.S., China, Japan and Russia, four member countries of the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear program.

The media reported that the ambassadors stressed the importance of resolving the nuclear issue within the existing framework of the Six-Party Talks. Most media also reported that the ambassadors agreed on the need for sanctions against North Korea but differed on the intensity of sanctions. According to media reports, the ambassadors from the U.S. and Japan stressed the importance of strictly enforcing UNSC Resolution 1874, but the Chinese ambassador said: "We supported Resolution 1874 but sanctions are not the purpose of the UNSC." The Russian ambassador was also cited: "Further sanctions against North Korea should be strictly prescribed, and economic aid should continue for North Korean citizens."

In a related development, all ROK media noted yesterday's press remarks by China's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Qin Gang that "China thinks it necessary to seek denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula through the Six-Party Talks." Most media interpreted this as China's roundabout way of expressing its opposition to the five-way approach.

Conservative Chosun Ilbo, in a commentary entitled "What Has Made Obama Turn Hard-line Toward N. Korea?", observed: "The Obama Administration seems determined to make North Korea's provocations an exemplary case in carrying out its global strategy. With hard-line policies toward North Korea, the Obama Administration is sending a strong message to other countries, including Iran, not to miscalculate the U.S.' intentions."

-Iran

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo editorialized: "This Iranian situation has showed the limitations and discrepancies of a theocratic state controlled by Islam's supreme leader. ... Election results can be manipulated at any time if they are not palatable to the supreme leader. ... The only way to peacefully resolve the current situation is to hold a new election or to conduct a recount of the votes from the June 12 election. If Tehran continues military crackdowns on protesters, it can temporarily thwart protests but cannot bring them to a permanent end."

"IRAN'S ANACHRONISTIC THEOCRACY IN CRISIS"
(JoongAng Ilbo, June 24, 2009, Page 42)

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo editorialized (06/24): "This Iranian situation has shown us the limitations and discrepancies of a theocratic state controlled by Islam's supreme leader. ... Election results can be manipulated at any time if they are not palatable to the supreme leader. ... The only way to peacefully resolve the current situation is to hold a new election or to conduct a recount of the votes from the June 12 election. If Tehran continues military crackdowns on protesters, it can temporarily thwart protests but cannot bring them to a permanent end."

WHAT HAS MADE OBAMA TURN HARD-LINE TOWARD N. KOREA?
(Chosun Ilbo, June 24, 2009, Page 30; Excerpts)

By Editorial Writer Park Doo-sik

There are deep strategic considerations behind President Obama's hard-line policy toward North Korea. North Korea and Iran were part of an "Axis of Evil," along with Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Obama has chosen different policies toward the remaining two Axis of Evil members - pressure and blockade for North Korea and dialogue for Iran. The Obama Administration seems determined to make North Korea's provocations an "exemplary case" in carrying out its global strategy. With hard-line policies toward North Korea, the Obama

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Administration is sending a strong message to other countries, including Iran, not to miscalculate the "U.S.' intentions." Many of the officials, who directly dealt with the North Korean issue under the Clinton Administration in the 1990s, are now serving as intermediate-level policymakers under the Obama Administration and leading this trend, which is being joined by the U.S. government and the people, too.

The Lee Myung-bak Administration asked the Obama Administration to take "stringent countermeasures." Obama has no reason to reject it.

An (ROK) government official noted, "The U.S. is now paying attention to how far the ROK will go in falling into step with the U.S." During the first nuclear crisis in 1993, the U.S. criticized the Kim Young-sam Administration for making an equivocal argument in favor of a "firm, not too firm" approach toward the North. If the current situation, in which a frame of pressure on and blockade of North Korea has already been set up, continues, a relaxed ROK could face an unexpected serious security crisis. What matters is (whether we have) an exit strategy. Does the Lee Myung-bak Government have a vision and a roadmap for this (situation)? Has the ROK and the U.S. mapped out any plan for their talks with North Korea?

Should the ROK pay a considerable price to turn the U.S., the world's greatest power, in a different direction? In April and May 1994 the U.S. intended to drop a nuclear bomb on North Korea but did not go ahead with it (considering its relations with the ROK.) In fall of that year, the ROK watched the Geneva talks between the U.S. and North Korea at a distance and ended up paying billions of dollars for the construction of light water reactors under the Geneva Agreement. How will the "North Korean drama" end this time?

FEATURES

"LIFELINE OF 100-DAY OLD ADMINISTRATION WAS CUT... ANGER OVER LEE MYUNG-BAK WAS AT A PEAK"
(Chosun Ilbo, June 19, 2009, Pages 1, 5)

By Reporters Lee Myung-jin and Ryu Jung

Prosecutors disclose the e-mails of PD Diary's scriptwriter.
Four producers and a scriptwriter are indicted.
"The media's critical comments are necessary, but they should be

based on facts."

Prosecutors have concluded that the PD Diary's distorted report about the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) was made by producers, who distorted and fabricated the story with "political intentions." The report sparked candlelight protests against U.S. beef imports last year, plunging the entire nation into chaos.

Wrapping up a one-year investigation, the Supreme Prosecutors' Office announced that five MBC staffers - PD Diary chief producer Cho Neung-hee, producer and host Song Il-joon, producers Kim Bo-seul and Lee Choon-keun, and scriptwriter Kim Eun-hee - were indicted without detention on charges of defaming (government officials) and obstructing the business (of U.S. beef importers.)

Prosecutors said that the suspects distorted truths according to their intentions, exaggerated the BSE risk (of U.S. beef), and disseminated false information on the ROKG's negotiation process on some 30 scenes shown in an April 29 episode titled "Is U.S. Beef Really Safe from BSE?". As evidence showing that the PD Diary episode was not a genuine media report but a "political propaganda," prosecutors submitted e-mails written by PD Diary scriptwriter Kim Eun-hee. The three e-mails, which were secured through a search and seizure that MBC denounced as "media suppression," were brief letters sent to Kim's acquaintances.

In the e-mails, Kim openly confessed that, while looking for an item for PD Diary, she conducted a s-e-c-r-e-t investigation into the

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rival of her favorite candidate for the general election. The e-mails were shocking to the extent that it even reminded us of "political murder" during the military dictatorship. Below are the contents of Kim's e-mails disclosed by prosecutors (The words in parentheses are additional explanations for readers).

June 13, 2008: "I Am Not Satisfied. We Did Not Finish Hong Jung-wook"

(Prosecutors explained that in the following e-mails, Kim told her acquaintance the substance of her conversation with producer Kim Bo-seul on the scene of a candlelight protest.)

"She (Producer Kim Bo-seul) asked me, 'Ms. Kim, how do you feel seeing this for yourself? Do you see what you have done? Are you satisfied now? Ha, ha."

"So I answered, 'No, I am not. We failed to kill Hong Jung-wook (Grand National Party Representative who was elected for Nowon District in Seoul in the April 9 general elections last year).' (...) In my opinion, such a man must be eliminated as early as possible for (the sake of) our future generation and far-sighted education policy. Above all, he beat Roh Hoi-chan (Chairman of the New Progressive Party who was defeated by Rep. Hong Jung-wook in the 18th general election last year). What a bastard."

"I feel uneasy as the power of the public - the power which cut the political lifeline of the 100-day old administration, the power which cracked the indomitable castle of Dong-A Ilbo, Chosun Ilbo, and JoongAng Ilbo, and the power which achieved things that no media or group did before - seems to be disappearing."

June 7, 2008: "That Was Because Anger over Lee Myung-bak Was at a Peak at That Time..."

"I get really involved in making a program once or twice a year. Last year's Samsung scandal and this year's mad cow disease were among them. Although it was pretty hard, I worked madly. I think that was because anger over Lee Myung-bak was at a peak at that time after the general elections."

"Because I am still very interested in the 'fate of Lee Myung-bak,' I have spent a lot of time watching the candlelight vigils and looking at (the online discussion forum) Agora on Dau."

June 7, 2008: "I was also frantically investigating Hong Jung-wook
..."

"While looking for an item for PD Diary, I was already frantically investigating Hong Jung-wook in order to find ways to vent my anger over the results of the general election. I frenetically searched for any tip. I am not saying, however, that our broadcast always 'targets' a specific person. ^^;"

Prosecutors said that, in the episode, there were 10 intentional mistranslations or translation omissions, 11 distortions of objective truths, 7 deliberate omissions of explanations, which are needed in order to relay accurate information, one case of misleading viewers by exaggerating only one out of many possible causes of BSE, and one distortion through scene editing.

PD Diary's distorted and false report was verified not only by the prosecution investigation but also by lower-court rulings. On June 17, the Seoul High Court ordered MBC to air corrections of false information, saying in its ruling, "Five statements, including that 'There is a 94 percent probability that Koreans will contract the human form of BSE if they eat U.S. beef from BSE-infected cattle,' are false." By running some corrections, PD Diary itself admitted its wrongdoings.

When the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries submitted an investigation request to the prosecution on June 20, 2008, MBC and the producers of PD Diary argued, "It is suppression of freedom of speech and the press," and opposition parties, such as

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the Democratic Party and the Democratic Labor Party, echoed (this sentiment), politicizing this issue. MBC union workers physically blocked prosecutors from exercising public authority, such as search and seizure, in protest.

However, Jeong Byeong-du, a senior prosecutor in charge of this investigation, dismissed the MBC's argument, saying, "The media's critical comments on government policies are necessary, but they should be made based on accurate facts. If they intentionally distort facts, they cannot be protected by law, and if a defamation of character is involved in the process, they will be punished for that."

After former Agriculture Minister Chung Woon-chun and former Chief Negotiator of the Beef Deal Min Dong-seok were vehemently criticized by the PD Diary report for "acting (in a manner that) is as shameful as an act committed by a traitor to the country during the Japanese colonial rule," they faced death threats to their families. This was also the same for other media outlets which tried to report on the BSE risks (of U.S. beef imports) in an objective and dispassionate manner.

This prosecution investigation demonstrates that the situation a year ago, in which "madness" dominated society, was sparked by the twisted mindset and behavior of PD Diary producers, who tried to use the public broadcaster for political purposes and propaganda.

LEE'S PROPOSAL FOR N. KOREA TALKS GETS CHILLY RECEPTION
(Chosun Ilbo, June 24, page 4)

By Reporter Kang In-seon

Some countries who took part in Six-Party nuclear talks with North Korea seem skeptical of a new approach to the issue suggested by President Lee Myung-bak. The proposal envisages the U.S. engaging in direct talks with North Korea after discussions with the ROK, China, Japan and Russia.

China appears reluctant, and others are stressing the importance of the Six-Party framework but do not like the idea of the U.S. negotiating with the North on its own after five-way discussions.

In a June 13 interview with the Wall Street Journal, President Lee Myung-bak said that maintaining the Six-Party Talks in the same way

as in the past means repeating trials and errors, and is therefore unlikely to yield any tangible results. President Lee proposed the U.S.-North Korea negotiation format.

Under this format, the U.S., which represents five nations minus North Korea, is to negotiate with the North. ROK diplomatic officials said that President Lee proposed this negotiation format and won support from President Obama.

China, which nominally chairs the long-stalled Six-Party Talks, on Tuesday pointedly made no comment on the proposal. When asked about China's position on the five-way approach, Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said, "China thinks it necessary to seek denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula through the Six-Party Talks."

Asked about the five-way format during a seminar hosted by Grand National Party lawmaker Gu Sang-chan on Tuesday, Chinese Ambassador Cheng Yonghua merely said, "We are deeply interested in it." China admits that the Six-Party Talks are in trouble but is still thinking of how to revive them, he added. He went on to say that even though coordinating the opinions from six nations is challenging, China has never said that it would stop (making such an effort.)

During the seminar, the ambassadors of China, Russia and Japan agreed that the issue should be solved within the Six-Party framework. They seemed reluctant to accept the five-way format, apparently because they feel the new proposal envisages the ROK and the U.S. taking the initiative with their countries left on the

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sidelines.

Denying press reports that the ROK and the U.S. had recently agreed on the five-way format, U.S. Ambassador Kathleen Stephens said the U.S. is "thinking seriously" of a five-way approach within the Six-Party framework. She said Washington wants to discuss with other participating nations how to pursue the five-way format within the Six-Party framework. She noted, "There are a variety of possible discussion formats and (Washington) has very close contact with all parties." Ambassador Stephens added that (the concerned parties) should not underestimate the Six-Party negotiation format.

Japanese Ambassador Toshinori Shigeie said the new format appeared to have no concrete prospects at this moment. Although it is the most realistic dialogue framework in the current circumstances, the Six-Party format needs to be overhauled in such a way that dissuades the North from repeating actions "running counter to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," he added.

In a statement Monday, the Russian Foreign Ministry supported the five-way format. But Russian Ambassador Gleb Ivashentsov said it was necessary to avoid any move that could be detrimental to the Six-Party process. He also stressed the need to find universally acceptable solutions to the issue through the Six-Party format.

The U.S., Japan, China and Russia differed in their views on the pace of the talks. The U.S. and Japan called for concurrent UN and individual sanctions against the North, while urging the other nations to strictly implement UN Security Council Resolution 1874. But China and Russia counseled patience and restraint.

(We have compared the English version on the website with the Korean version and made some changes to make them identical.)

AMBASSADORS CALL FOR STRICT ENFORCEMENT OF UNSC RESOLUTION AGAINST NORTH KOREA
(Dong-a Ilbo, June 24, page 6)

By Reporter Cho Su-jin

On June 23, U.S. Ambassador Kathleen Stephens, Chinese Ambassador Cheng Yonghua, Japanese Ambassador Toshinori Shigeie and Russian Ambassador Gleb Ivashentsov shared the view that the latest UN

Security Council resolution against North Korea over its second nuclear test should be strictly enforced. The ambassadors, however, expressed different opinions on (imposing) additional sanctions other than the UN Security Council resolution. They attended a session on the North Korean nuclear issue at the National Assembly, hosted by Grand National Party lawmaker Gu Sang-chan.

U.S. Ambassador Stephens said that the U.S. will strictly enforce UN Security Council resolution 1874, adding that the U.S. "is committed to do what is necessary" unless the North stops its (provocative) actions. Japanese Ambassador Shigeie said that it is important to deliver the message of the international community (to North Korea) that it will cut off funds for weapons of mass destruction. However, Chinese Ambassador Cheng noted, "China supported Resolution 1874 but sanctions are not the purpose of the UNSC." Russian Ambassador Ivashentsov said, "Further sanctions against North Korea should be strictly prescribed, and economic aid should continue for North Korean citizens."

The ambassadors from the four nations also stressed the importance of reviving the Six-Party Talks process aimed at resolving the North Korean nuclear issue peacefully. Ambassador Stephens said that the U.S. "has long insisted we want to engage all parties."

AMBASSADORS FROM FOUR NATIONS DISCUSS NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR ISSUE
(JoongAng Ilbo, June 24, page 5; Excerpts)

By Reporter Baek Il-hyun

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At a seminar hosted by Grand National Party lawmaker Gu Sang-chan on June 23, ambassadors from U.S., China, Japan and Russia reaffirmed that North Korea's nuclear threats should be resolved diplomatically through the Six-Party Talks. The four ambassadors shared the need for sanctions against North Korea over its second nuclear test but differed on the intensity of sanctions.

AMBASSADORS SAY THAT NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR ISSUE SHOULD BE RESOLVED
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF SIX-PARTY TALKS
(Hankook Ilbo, June 24, page 5; Excerpts)

By Reporter Yang Jeong-dae

On June 23, ambassadors from U.S., China, Japan and Russia stressed the importance of the Six-Party Talks aimed at resolving the North Korean nuclear issue peacefully and called on North Korea to return to the Talks quickly. Meanwhile, they were cautious about the five-way talks proposed by President Lee Myung-bak.

U.S. Ambassador Kathleen Stephens said that the UNSC resolution should be strictly enforced... the door of dialogue is open.

Ambassador Stephens said the U.S.-ROK joint vision statement reaffirms the U.S. commitment to "verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula."

She added that the U.S. approach includes "work through the UN and appropriate measures." Stephens said, "The U.S. is willing and eager to engage North Korea through diplomacy, including bilaterally within the framework of the Six-Party process."

As for the two U.S. journalists detained in North Korea, Ambassador Stephen said, "As it is a humanitarian issue, it will be resolved in that light."

STEPHENSONS